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UNCLAS LIMA 003813

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ANTI-TERRORISM COURT ISSUES VERDICTS IN EL POLO
BOMBING

REF: LIMA 3798

1. The National Anti-Terrorism Court convicted Wilbert Elqui Meza Magino of participating in the planning of the 3/20/2002 bombing at the El Polo shopping center across the street from the U.S. Embassy, and sentenced him to a 30-year prison term. Seven other co-defendants were acquitted of involvement in the El Polo bombing, but three, Lidia Vasquez Zevallos, Lucy Romero Acosta, and Ida Lucia Mendoza Mateo were found guilty of belonging to the Sendero Luminoso terrorist organization and sentenced to prison terms of 20-25 years. Four of the defendants were ordered released: Roger Torres Velasquez, Maria Delia Marino, Giovana Anaya Nalvarte, and Dimas Pastor Carrera.

2. COMMENT: The verdicts in the El Polo case were expected, as judicial authorities concluded that there was insufficient admissible evidence to link all of the defendants to the bombing (Reftel). Despite their acquittal on the El Polo charges, three of the defendants were proved to be important political leaders within the remnants of Sendero Luminoso, and will consequently serve significant prison terms. END
COMMENT.
STRUBLE